



August 12, 2015

**NEW MEXICO FIELD OFFICE TECHNICAL GUIDE  
TRANSMITTAL NOTICE NO. NM-81**

**SUBJECT:** ECS – Section II, Lesser Prairie Chicken Guidance Documents

**Purpose:** To provide the Endangered Species Act effect determination flow chart and supporting Ecological Site ranking scores essential to making effect determinations for lesser prairie chickens when rangeland is converted to cropland.

**Effective Date:** This notice is effective when received.

**Affected Geographic Area:** Quay, Curry, Roosevelt, Lea, Chavez, and Eddy Counties.

**Filing Instructions:** These documents are accessible through New Mexico NRCS electronic Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG), Section II – Threatened and Endangered Species – ESA Consultation – Lesser Prairie Chicken <http://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/treemenuFS.aspx>.

**Explanation:** Converting rangeland to cropland has the potential to adversely affect the Lesser Prairie Chicken (LPC). NRCS policy prohibits providing technical or financial assistance in instances where there is an avoidable adverse effect to threatened or endangered species, including development of an Highly Erodible Lands (HEL) conservation plan. The guidance includes a narrative description of the process, considerations for the effect determination and a flowchart of the process (“LPC Effect Guidance for Cropland Conversion”), as well as a table of Ecological Site Descriptions (ESD) “values” to assist with the effect determinations (“ESD values for box 3 of LPC Cropland Conversion Effect Guidance”). NRCS also used this opportunity to post the LPC Rangewide Plan, which includes useful background information about the lesser prairie chicken as well as the original ESD value table.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steve Kadas", with a stylized flourish underneath.

STEVE KADAS  
State Resource Conservationist